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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Tim Breitbarth, Guillaume Bodet, Álvaro Fernández Luna,
Pablo Burillo Naranjo, Gerardo Bielons (Eds.)

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Marketing Concept in Team Sports in Serbia: Testing the Influences of Leadership, Organizational Culture and Climate for Innovation

Matić, Radenko M.¹; Maksimović, Nebojša¹; Valantine, Irena²; Milošević, Zoran¹; Fominiene, Vilija Bite²; Jakšić, Damjan¹

¹University of Novi Sad/Faculty of Sport and Physical Education, Serbia; ²Lithuanian Sports University, Lithuania; radenkomatic@uns.ac.rs

Aim and Research Questions

The aim of the research was testing the influences of leadership, organizational learning culture, and climate for innovation in the application of marketing concepts in team sports in Serbia.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Many researches showed that the business of sports is becoming more and more focused on leadership skills and abilities, and other aspects of managing an organization such as organizational culture, organizational learning culture and climate for innovation. Thus, the positive influence of transformational leadership at all levels in the sports organization was confirmed, and the biggest effect evaluated at the team level by Wang (2011) in his meta-analysis. Likewise, it is evident that leaders are working on the realization of the organizational goals set in front of themselves and their followers, which can be realized through the organizational culture that leads to the realization of the desired vision and mission of the organization. The importance and compatibility of culture with other aspects of management and organization is emphasized by Beech & Chadwick (2010), whilst Smith & Shilbury (2004) claim that behavior and success can be taken as a good starting point in the research of cultural dimensions of sports organizations. Such an environment requires their willingness to accept consistent change as a result of the impact of globalization, politics and their professionalization (Hoye, Smith, Westerbeek, Stewart, & Nicholson (2009). Consequently, it is very important to determine which factors affect the introduction, application, and improvement of the marketing concept of management in the environment of team sports.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The sample of respondents consisted of 118 available managers of different levels in sports clubs from four team sports (football, basketball, handball, and volleyball), which belong to the highest ranking of the competition in Serbia. The applied questionnaire included of five sections: 1) Demographic characteristics of respondents and sports organizations, 2) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass & Avolio (1993), 3) Organizational learning culture - individual, group and organizational level, 4) Climate for organizational innovations (support for innovation and resource supply dimensions) which suggested by Sarros, Cooper, & Santora (2008), and 5) sport marketing (level of knowledge of marketing concept, elements of marketing mix, marketing strategies, characteristics of marketing goals and sponsorship).The theoretical model was defined with the task of orienting this empirical research. Independent

variables are divided into the external ones (sports characteristics, sports club type, infrastructure, staff, finances, sponsors, local community) and the internal (style of leadership, organizational culture, and climate for organizational innovations) factors. In order to get a dependent variable, a definition is provided for the marketing concept, or i.e. the circumstances that are desirable for the diffusion of the marketing concept and sports organization development. Statistical data analysis included a path-analysis and analysis of mediation (Sobel test).

Results and discussion

The Structural Equation Modeling analysis run with AMOS revealed good fit indices: $\chi^2 = 4765$, $df = 959$, $\chi^2/df = 4.97$, CFI = 0.93, NFI = 0.92, and RMSEA = 0.06. The obtained results enabled examination of the direct and indirect effects of the variables on the application of the marketing concept in function of the dependent variable. It can be noted that the marketing concept in team sports in Serbia is directly related to the status of sports ($\beta = 0.30$), the sport-competitive result ($\beta = 0.37$) and the education of managers ($\beta = 0.23$). Likewise, a positive direct influence was observed in the variables of the sport's club assets and sports club environment (presence of the sponsor, $\beta = 0.36$), while the wider environment of the local community did not have a significant effect. The style of management did not have a direct effect on the adoption of a marketing concept in sports clubs. On the other hand, a more complex channel of indirect effects on the acceptance and implementation of the marketing concept in the sample of clubs is mediated by the innovative climate in club management ($\beta = 0.40$).

Conclusions

In conclusion, the biggest problem is the discordance of the organizational learning culture with the climate of innovation, which represents a bottleneck in the marketing reconstruction of team management. In this regard, it can be noted that the climate of innovation is a key point of support for organizational, leadership and cultural changes in sports clubs, by means of which they can step in modern business and sports-competitive environment that requires the setting of sports according to the principle of the marketing concept. The mentioned intervention in the orientation of the climate of innovation in the club is also contributed by the type of club i.e. its competitive orientation, as well as the use of potential assets that can be put into the function of the marketing business performance of the club.

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